A Decisive Note

By

Elizabeth Strong Worthington,
Author of "How to Cook Husbands"

Copyright, 1905, by I. D. Marshall

It was the last of July, and Harry Reynolds' trunks and bags were packed for home. Right glad he was of it, too, although everything had been done to make his visit to his college friend pleasant. He had yachted, played golf, polo and tennis; he had danced and flirted until satiated. Now he was tired and restless, and he was going home to loll around and refuse invitations until his present host, Bert Fernby, was ready to join him in a Rocky mountain hunt.

The girls had all but wept over his departure.

"You take the season with you, Mr. Reynolds," said one.

"But I leave its fairest blossoms," he replied.

More than one girl had flung herself at him, to be gently and flatteringly declined. They had one and all given him occasion to know his power, and he was no dullard. He fully realized his attractions and was well pleased with himself.

"What's that—the mail?" he asked, running down the stairway to meet the footman, whose hands were full of letters.

On the way to his room, absorbed in his mail, he stumbled into Miss Leland, the plain little governess of the Fernby children.

"I beg pardon, Miss"—.

But there he had recourse to mumbling, for he had seen so little of her that he had forgotten her name.

There were all sorts of letters in the bunch he held in his hand, both gossipy and flirtatious. One was an adoring, pleading note from a society girl that made his face crimson with pity and shame. There were invitations, and—was that all? No. He picked up a little note in a woman's hand that had fallen to the floor and opened it. There was no address inside, no signature. It read:

"Will you ever be a man, or will you always content yourself with the shallow praise of shallow people? God made

"YOU ARE RUNNING OFF WITH OUR COPY, HARRY!"

you handsome; your parents made you wealthy; ease made you good natured. You yourself have done nothing but shirk your responsibilities in a world that calls for workers. What right have you to self satisfaction? Shame belongs to you instead. Be a man! You can, with God's help, if you will."

Reynolds let the note fall and leaned back in his chair.

It was the first time any one ever had addressed such words to him. Something within him began to vibrate. He felt prickles throughout his entire being, and the sensation was well nigh as painful as when a sleeping foot is being slapped into action.

For an hour he sat almost motionless; then he rose, a new light in his face, a new thrill in every fiber.

Picking up the letter, he read aloud: "Be a man! You can, with God's help, if you will."

"With God's help, I will!" he murmured in a low, resolute voice.

There was a knock at his door. "An expressman for your luggage, sir," said the footman.

"Send him away," answered Harry impulsively. "I've changed my mind. I'm not going today."

"Aha!" exclaimed Bert Fernby, who just then ran upstairs and overheard. "So you've come to your senses. Mother didn't talk in vain after all. Come on, now, and we'll have a sail instead of a ride to the station."

But all through Bert's chatter quite different thoughts were repeating themselves in various forms in his guest's brain.

"I must learn who wrote that note. My very soul goes out to her!"

* * * * * * *

A month of search was ended, and Harry's fair inspirer was still unknown. For awhile all the family wondered what had come over the boy. He went eagerly to every gathering, but always came away dejected. But for two weeks now he had seemed less restless. Indeed, his host complained he had become a stupid old bachelor, wanting nothing better than a chance to stay about the house and chat with Mrs. Fernby or with Miss Leland, the quiet little governess.

Again he was packing his trunks for home when, putting his letter paper into a little drawer, he came across the note that had detained him. He smiled as he opened it and began t[illegible] but soon his face grew serio[illegible] he walked up and down the room.

"Be a man! You can, with God's help!"

He repeated the words aloud. "I mean to be a man," he said, "but not for your sake, my fair writer, as I thought at first. I"— Here he paused and walked [illegible] the while with [illegible] face that [illegible] strong. [illegible] but now [illegible]."

For a [illegible] the floor [illegible] I weren't pledged [illegible]" he said at [illegible] to enter the [illegible] he paused and reflected [illegible] recalling the old days [illegible] dreamed of being a [illegible] only of easy hours [illegible]. Now in his plan for entering that profession he was reaching upward to something above mere comfort and money.

There was a confused, uncertain tapping at his door.

"Come!" he called, and Mabel and Willie, the little Fernby children, ran in. Harry was their greatest chum.

"See!" they cried. "We are writing papa a letter."

"Is this it?" the man asked, taking a crumpled paper from Willie's hand.

"No, siree! You don't think I'd write like that, do you?" Willie responded scornfully. "That's the copy. Here's mine!"

His words fell on deaf ears, for Harry was making excited comparisons between the "copy" and a certain note he still held in his hand.

"Here, Harry, what you doing? You are running off with our copy, Harry!"

But Harry was already out of the room, down the stairs, knocking at the door of the schoolroom.

"Come in!" said a gentle voice.

"You wrote that note!" he said in a low tone, full of repressed emotion.

"Oh, Mr. Reynolds! How could you—how did you—I never thought"—

"I want to thank you for it. I want to thank you for all the words you have spoken to me and for the new motive. Miss Leland, I am going away today. Give me one little hope—Ruth!"

She had covered her face with her hands to hide her blushes, but she did not say him nay.

English Archers.

When King Henry VIII. ascended the throne his ruling idea seems to have been the encouragement of archery, and hence came statutes for enforcing on the whole male population constant practice with the bow (1512) and for the prohibition of the weapon to all aliens without the king's license (1542). Hence came, likewise, the inforporation of the artillery company in 1537, for Henry himself was proud of the national weapon and had shown himself at the Field of the Cloth of Gold to be marvelously stout and expert in its practice. And yet when the sixteenth century was fairly opened French writers began to speak disrespectfully of the English archers, not because those archers had failed to defeat their old enemies, but because they had not met them in the open field.

At the siege of Therouanne, 1513, for instance, the French cavalry attacked an English victualing train escorted by archers only, but were beaten off with heavy loss, for the nimble English intrenched themselves behind their wagons—laagered themselves, in fact, for the tactics of the Boers are no new thing—and poured in a most deadly and destructive fire. And so, says Fleuranges in a patronizing way, "the English are good men and fight well when parked in a strong position. Otherwise I make no great account of them."

Won't Patronize Himself.

In the photographer's family were a wife, three daughters, two sons and, just as an afterthought, the photographer himself. All of this happy number have been photographed frequently, yet, strange to say, none of their pictures bears the stamp of home industry.

"How is this?" asked an inquisitive friend. "Why don't you people have your pictures taken in your own studio?"

"For the same reason," replied the photographer, "that a doctor calls in another practitioner to treat his family when ill, that a lawyer generally fights shy of arguing his own case and that a dressmaker, no matter how competent, hires somebody else to fit her gowns. They are afraid they cannot do justice to a subject in which they take such a vital interest. That is why all of my brood patronize a rival concern when they want really fine photographs. In my own studio I would be likely to give a much more satisfactory sitting to strangers than to my own children."—New York Press.

Royal College of Physicians.

In the tenth year of the reign of Henry VIII., on Sept. 23, 1518, "John Chambre, Thomas Linacre, Ferdinand de Victoria, Medicorum Nostrorum, Nicholas Holsack, John Francis, Robert Yaxley," were granted letters patent giving them the privilege of admitting men to practice medicine in London and seven miles around. This was the original foundation of the present Royal College of Physicians of London. The first letters patent having apparently been inadequate for the purposes intended, in the fourteenth year of Henry VIII. a statute was passed enacting that no person save a graduate of Oxford or Cambridge should practice in England unless he had a license from the president of the College of Physicians aforesaid and from three of the "elects," who were chosen from among the fellows.